

ALPHACRUCIS STUDENT GROUP TOUR TURKEY & GREECE
26th SEPTEMBER – 14th OCTOBER 2018

Weds. 26 Sep. Depart Sydney (or other Australian City)

Depart Australia on your international economy flight.

Thu. 27 Sep. Arrive Istanbul – Fly to Izmir

Upon arrival at Istanbul Airport, connect to Izmir flight.

Meet the local guide in Izmir airport and transfer to hotel for dinner and overnight.

Fri. 28 Sep. Sardis – Philadelphia – Hierapolis - Pamukkale overnight

We enjoy a panoramic ride of **Smyrna**, the third largest city in Turkey and one of the sites of the Seven Churches of Asia [Rev. 2:12-17]. Smyrna is a city scarred with a bloody history of trade and warfare. We ascend to Mount Pagus where we visit the Citadel of Lysimachos, commander of Alexander the Great, erected in the 4th century BC.

Then, we depart to one of the most picturesque areas of any of the Seven Churches of Asia [Rev. 1:11; 3:1-4], **Sardis**, presently Sart. This was the capital of the ancient Lydian kingdom of the 6th century BC, portrayed as a dying church. We visit the great Temple of Artemis and the Temple of Cybele, which became a Byzantine Church. We will also visit the restored gymnasium and reconstructed Synagogue. We also see the last several meters of the royal Persian Road from Susa to Sardis built by Cyrus the Great and the «golden» river Pactolos. After a **lunch break**, we continue our journey to **Philadelphia**, nowadays called Alasehir, another church of the Seven Churches of Asia [Rev. 1:11; 3:7], and the only church not censured. There we see the remains of a Byzantine basilica built of brick, with a bit of high arch and some 11th century frescoes.

Then, we drive to the healing city of **Hierapolis**, actually Pamukkale, the white «cotton fortress» where hot mineral water bursts from the earth and cascades over steep cliffs forming pools, channels and stalactites. The therapeutic waters were known to the founders of Hierapolis and of Laodicea in 190 BC. In Hierapolis [Col. 4:13] we visit the Martyrium of the Apostle Philip where he was martyred during the persecutions ordered by Domitian. We visit the Gate of Domitian, the Arcadian Way, the 2nd century AD Theatre, the Nymphaion, the Temple of Apollo, the Plutonium and the Necropolis.

Transfer to your hotel for overnight stay in Pamukkale.

Sat. 29 Sep. Laodicea – Aphrodisias - Kusadasi

We will start the day by visiting **Laodicea** (present name Denizli) yet another of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor [Rev. 1:11; 3:14; Col. 2:1; 4:13-16]. We see the ancient theatre, the remains of basilica and ancient stone water pipes.

Drive to Ephesus after Laodicea visit and on the way, visit to Aphrodisias. **Aphrodisias** was primarily known as a center for the arts, specifically sculpture. The Aphrodisias School of Sculpture had a distinctive style and was very well circulated throughout the Greek and Roman world. **Lunch** at a local restaurant.

Drive to Kusadasi for overnight.

Sun, 30 Sep. Ancient Ephesus - Ephesus museum - St. John Basilica - Artemis Temple - Kusadasi

After breakfast drive to Selcuk and visit ancient city of **Ephesus**. The Apostle Paul preached to the Ephesians and lived here for three years. This church also received an epistle from him. We tour the spectacular ruins where excavations still continue in this once great and important city, which was founded in the 10th century BC.

Walk through history along marble streets lined with wonderful public buildings, among them the Baths of Scholastica, the Library of Celsus, the Temple of Hadrian and the Theatre. We will continue our visits with **Ephesus Museum**. After the museum, we will have visits to the **Basilica of St. John** and **The Temple of Artemis** (Diana) of the Ephesians, another of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was built in this city. At the end of the tour drive back to Kusadasi for overnight.

Mon, 1 Oct. Sirince Village - Thyatira – Pergamum

After breakfast, first drive up to the pretty old Turkish-Orthodox mountain village **Sirince**, located on the top of a mountain, where anyone will enjoy the impressive wine yards' and peach trees'. The village has synthesis of Turk-Greek culture, where we visit mosque and Orthodox church. All the narrow streets of the village belong to the women, selling handcrafts of all kinds, olive oil. Another attraction of Sirince is its fruity wine: try its taste in small cafés.

Then we continue our visit to **Thyatira**, now called Akhisar, another one of the Seven Churches of Asia [Rev. 1:11; 2:18-24; Acts 16:14]. It was a city famous for purple dyes. We visit the remains of a basilica and some architectural fragments from the Roman period.

Lydia, the seller of purple in Philippi, was from Thyatira.

Drive to Pergamum and overnight.

Tue, 2 Oct. Pergamum (Acropolis & Asclepeion) – Canakkale

We visit **Pergamum**, actually called Bergama. It is one of the sites of the Seven Churches of Asia [Rev. 1:11; 2:12]. Here we explore the impressive **Acropolis**, the steepest theatre in the world, the **Asklepieion**, famous medical centre of classical times, see the Altar of Zeus which is mentioned as the «Throne of Satan» in the book of Revelation, the marble columns of the Temple of Trajan and the Library which was foremost in the world and was long a rival of the equally famous Library of Alexandria in Egypt. Its wealth of volumes was estimated at over 200,000. It inspired the invention of parchment.

Drive to Canakkale and on the way stop for a **lunch**. Overnight in Canakkale.

Wed, 3 Oct. Gallipoli – Troy - Canakkale

After the breakfast we drive to the World War I Battlefield of **Gallipoli**.

We will visit the **Kabatepe War Museum, Anzac Cove, Hell Spit Cemetery, Lone Pine, The Nek, and Chunuk Bair War memorial**.

On the way back to Canakkale down town and hotel, you will have your **lunch** in a restaurant. After lunch you will be taken to the movie star ancient city of **Troy**, see the legendary walls and the replica of the wooden horse. Drive back to your hotel in Canakkale and overnight.

Thu, 4 Oct. Border crossing to Greece - Kavala

After breakfast we depart from hotel cross by ferry to Eceabat port and from there drive to the Greek/Turkish borders. After custom formalities, we farewell with the Turkish guide and cross into Greece. Meet the Greek guide and board the bus to continue on to Kavala, passing by Alexandroupolis. Arrive at the hotel in Kavala in late noon.

Dinner and overnight at hotel. (B,D)

Fri, 5 Oct. Philippi – Amphipolis – Thessaloniki

In the morning we will visit Philippi (Acts 16:12-40; 20:6), the site where the apostle Paul was imprisoned with Syllas. We see the ruins of this prison/crypt, dating from the Roman period, the ancient Roman forum built during the time of Augustus (Acts 16:19) and the basilica with the Greek Theatre (4th century BC), which was converted into an arena by the Romans and used during the persecutions of the early days of the church.

Paul's letter to the Philippians was addressed to the local Christians 14 years after his first visit there. Of all the churches Paul founded, probably none was as near and dear to him as the church at Philippi (Acts 16:9-33). Philippi was named after Philip II, king of Macedonia father of Alexander the Great.

We will then continue on to see the river where Paul baptized Lydia, a purple fabric merchant, who became the first Christian woman to be baptized on European soil (Acts 16:14, 15, 40). We will have time to worship here. We will then continue on to Thessaloniki, the second largest city of Greece after a brief stop on the way to Amphipolis, where we see the *Lion* statue, landmark of the town. Late in the afternoon we will check-in at hotel in Thessaloniki for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

Sat, 6 Oct. Thessaloniki – Berea – Kalambaka

In the morning we will enjoy a panoramic bus tour of Thessaloniki (Acts 17:1-13). According to the Book of the Acts many Greeks believed and even many «*Greek chief women*» (Acts 17:1-4). Paul wrote two epistles to Thessalonians, both in the canon of the New Testament. We will start out tour with a visit to the upper part of the *Old City Walls* with the *Great Gate*, which connects the city with the *Via Egnatia*. (*Via Egnatia* was the transcontinental east-west road of the Roman Empire built on the 2nd century BC). Here we have excellent views of the City and the opportunity to take pictures. We then continue our sightseeing tour along the seaside road viewing the *White Tower*, the statue of Alexander the Great, the triumphal Arch of Galerius and Rotunda were later converted to the Church of St George. We will also see the remains of the Palace complex of Galerius (late 3rd century AD) and the ruins of Roman Forum. Optional visit to *St. Demetrius' Church* before departing to Berea.

On our way to Kalambaka we will stop in Berea, where the Apostle Paul arrived and according to his custom went to the synagogue where, to his pleasant surprise, he discovered that these Jews were "*more noble*" than those he had encountered in Thessalonica. We see the Byzantine mosaic in the monument commemorating his preaching and visit the Jewish synagogue (if the time allows). (Acts 17:10-11).

Our last stop will be in Kalambaka where we arrive in late afternoon. Dinner and overnight at hotel. (B,D)

Sun, 7 Oct. Meteora – Athens

In the morning we enjoy a spectacular drive up to visit the wonderful place of Meteora monasteries. This is a tremendous introduction to the Greek Orthodox Church. The Meteora are colossal symmetrical gray and reddish boulders, as though pushed upwards from the bowels of mother earth by an invisible hand, sustain breathtaking beautiful monasteries perched precariously high above the ground. They were first built in the 14th century by monks seeking isolation and salvation, accessible only by ropes thrown from above. We will climb through steps built since. They are veritable Byzantine museums exhibiting superb icons, old manuscripts and unique mosaics and frescoes.

After the visit we drive on the highway towards Athens, where we arrive in late afternoon. Dinner and overnight at hotel in Athens (B,D)

Mon, 8 Oct. Athens (Acropolis – Museum - Agora)

After early breakfast we enjoy our full-day sightseeing tour of Athens. We climb up to the marble-capped Acropolis, the sacred rock of Athens, the citadel and the sanctuary of the city in antiquity. We visit the famous Parthenon and the Erechtheion. We now have become time travelers! Then, we go to nearby Mars' Hill (Areopagus) to read Acts 17:22 where Paul gave his famous speech to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17:18-34) and spoke about the inscription: "to an unknown god". Our tour continues with the highlights of modern Athens: we pass by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Parliament House, the Academy, the University of Athens, the National Library, Panathenaic Stadium, Temple of Olympian Zeus, and Hadrian's Arch. We continue our sightseeing tour with a visit the Acropolis Museum is an archaeological museum focused on the findings of the archaeological site of the Acropolis of Athens. Artifacts found on the rock and on its feet, date from the Greek Bronze Age to Roman and Byzantine Greece.

After the visit we will have some free time for lunch. We will then visit the Ancient Agora which was formerly the commercial hub of ancient Athens and birthplace of politics and philosophy. Here apostle Paul reasoned with the most skeptical audience he met in the course of his travels. We see the very well preserved Doric Temple of Hephaestus (or Thesaeion) and the Stoa of Attalos, an arcade built by Attalos II, king of Pergamum, used as a retail market.

Today it is used as museum, displaying statues, pottery and especially coins. After the visit return to hotel for dinner and overnight in Athens (B,D)

Tue, 9 Oct. Athens (National Archaeological Museum – Sounion)

Late in the morning we will visit the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, one of the most important museums of Greece. It displays finds from all parts of the ancient Greek world, dating from Neolithic times all the way to the last years of the Roman Empire. Some of the statues will enthrall you; gold findings from tombs will amaze you with their intricacy and unparalleled beauty; and artifacts of all ages and places will astound you! Marble statues of goddess Athena, whose name the city of Athens has taken will leave you, mesmerized! After a brief stop for lunch we will board the bus and enjoy a scenic drive along the southern coastal suburbs of Athens, towards Sounion. Passing by the sandy beaches and marinas of Faliron, Voula, Vouliagmeni and Varkiza we will arrive in Sounion. Here we will visit the Doric marble Temple of Poseidon, overlooking the Aegean Sea and connected with the Greek myth of Theseus who killed Minotaur in Crete. We will be guided at the site and will have some free time to take pictures and enjoy the breathtaking sunset.

Return to hotel in late afternoon for dinner and overnight in Athens. (B,D)

Wed, 10 Oct. Corinth – Acrocorinth – Nafplion – Tolo

Our morning excursion out of Athens takes us by the Saronic Gulf, where in 480 BC history's root was changed! The small Grecian fleet managed to defeat the enormously powerful armada of the Persians. From here, via the historic Corinthian Canal, we arrive at ancient Corinth (Acts 18:1-18). It was to Corinth, this megalopolis where the apostle Paul came and worked, established a thriving church, subsequently sending two of his epistles now part of the New Testament. Here, we see all of the sites associated with his ministry: the Agora, the Temple of Apollo, the Roman Odeon, the Bema and Gallio's Seat. The small local archaeological museum here is an absolute must! In Romans 16:23 Paul mentions his friend Erastus and we will see an inscription to him at the site.

After the visit we will climb up to Acrocorinth, actually the acropolis of Corinth which is crowned by a Venetian citadel. It is situated to the southwest of the ancient city and rises to an elevation of 1883 ft. [574 m.]. Today it is surrounded by walls that are about 3 km. long. The current walls were built and rebuilt by the Byzantines, Franks, Venetians, and Ottoman Turks. Writing of days prior to Paul, Strabo said that the Temple of Aphrodite owned one thousand temple-slaves and prostitutes! Thus the reputation of Corinth was well-known. After the tour check-in at hotel in Tolo for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

Thu, 11 Oct. Mycenae – Epidaurus – Tolo

Early in the morning we will drive to Mycenae where we will see the remains of the prehistoric citadel fortified with the Cyclopean Walls, the Lionesses' Gate, the remains of the Mycenaean Palace and the Tomb of King Agamemnon in which we will actually enter.

After lunch, we will continue on to visit Epidaurus: the *Sanctuary of Asclepius*, ancient god of healing. Here we'll see the best-preserved ancient theatre in all of Greece, famous for the harmony of its design and the perfection of its remarkable acoustics, easily accommodating 12,000 people. After the visit we will have free time in Nafplion, the picturesque city which was the first capital of modern Greek State back in 1830's. Return to hotel in late afternoon for dinner and overnight in Tolo. (B,D)

Fri, 12 Oct. Isthmia – Cenchreae - Athens

At the southern end of the Corinth Canal is the site of ancient Isthmia, once the major local religious centre (devoted to Poseidon, god of the sea and the boy-god Palaimon) and location of the biennial Isthmian Games. We will see only the foundations of Poseidon's temple (7th century BC) and the remains of a starting gate for track events in the adjacent, vanished stadium. In the local museum unique exhibits include panels of painted glass or stone embedded in a resin matrix. They were intended to decorate an Isis temple but were never used owing to an earthquake in 375 AD. The Apostle Paul merely visited the Isthmian Games during his first stay in Corinth (I Cor. 9:24-27).

On our return way to Athens we will see the ruins of early Christian 5th century basilica in Cenchreae. In the afternoon we check-in at hotel in Athens for dinner and overnight. (B,D)

Sat, 13 Oct. Athens Departure

After breakfast at hotel we will board the bus for departure transfer to Athens International Airport "Eleftherios Venizelos".

Hotels:

Izmir	Ramada Plaza or similar
Pamukkale	Tripolis Thermal Hotel or similar
Kusadasi	Marina Hotel or similar
Bergama	Berksoy Hotel or similar
Canakkale	Buyuk Truva Hotel or similar
Kavala	Oceanis or similar
Thessalonica	El Greco or similar
Kalambaka	Famissi or similar
Athens	Stanley or similar
Tolo	Tolon Holidays or similar

Not included:

- All personal expenses.
- Travel and medical health insurance.
- Drinks and beverages.
- Visa fees.
- Tips to local bus drivers, guides, hotel & restaurant staff.

Included services:

- 16-nights' accommodation in 3 or 4-star hotels based on sharing room with private facilities in Turkey and Greece.
- Buffet Breakfast and Dinner at hotels.
- 6 lunches in Turkey & 9 lunches in Greece (at local restaurants)
- All land transportation by private fully air conditioned luxury motor coaches (*from 10 up to 50-seater buses*)
- All sightseeing tours with the services of local professional English or Korean speaking tour guides throughout.
- Escorted group transfers between Izmir/Athens airports and hotels.
- Highway tolls, ferrying fees and parking fees.
- All entrance fees to the archaeological/historical sites and museums as specified in the itinerary.
- One way Istanbul-Izmir domestic flight.
- Turkish/Greek land border crossing fees.
- All local taxes and new stayover tax for hotels in Greece.
- Whisper sets for the tours. (from 25 persons and more)